

INSPECTION REPORT

THE DEANS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Swinton, Manchester

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105924

Headteacher: F Hartley

Lead inspector: A Markham

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 April 2004

Inspection number: 258115

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	227
School address:	Vicarage Road Swinton Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M27 0WA
Telephone number:	0161 728 2089
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S P Naylor

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average size primary school is situated in Swinton within Salford. The majority of pupils live in local authority housing nearby, but some come from further afield. There are 227 pupils in the school in eight classes, all organised by age. The proportion of pupils with special learning needs is below average compared to that found nationally. Their main difficulties are moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems and speech difficulties. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils are from other than White British backgrounds and very few pupils speak other than English at home. The number of pupils claiming their entitlement to free school meals is broadly average. Children enter school when they are three into the nursery class. Most children have some pre-school experience, but their attainment on entry is below average. The rate of pupil mobility is above average.

Since it opened in 1994 the school has made very good progress. It received a most improved school award in 1999 and Beacon School status in 2000. In 2002 the school received a Government Achievement Award. The school has achieved Healthy School status and is involved in the Salford and Trafford Schools Sports Coordinator Partnership. Links with the local community are a strong feature of the work of the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1390	A Markham	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education English as an additional language
9843	S Drake	Lay inspector	
12060	P Peaker	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Religious education Special educational needs
30724	D Hiscock	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
7418	K Rollisson	Team inspector	Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. The school is extremely well led and managed. The teaching is very good and pupils' achievement is very good. The school works hard to overcome the barriers to learning presented by the pupils' below average attainment on entry and an above average rate of pupil mobility. Parents are very pleased with the school. The school provides **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent.
- Very good teaching creates very positive attitudes in pupils and the learning ethos throughout the school is consequently very good.
- Standards are good and pupils achieve very well.
- Promotion of pupils' personal development is outstanding.
- The higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not challenged enough in science.
- The school presents a very good curriculum, which is enriched by a very good range of extra curricular activities.
- Links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Children have a very good start in the nursery.

Since the school was last inspected in 1998, overall improvement has been good. All of the key issues identified in the last report have been addressed successfully. Target setting procedures are now very good and effectively support the raising of attainment. Curriculum planning has improved and ensures that pupils are generally suitably challenged. The governors comply with all statutory requirements and monitor the work of the school well. Standards throughout the school, teaching and learning, leadership and management, governance, the pupils' personal development, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils and the rate of attendance have all improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	C	A	A
mathematics	A*	A	C	C
science	B	C	D	D

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Achievement is **very good**. Children in the nursery and reception classes make very good progress and achieve very well. By the time they enter Year 1, most attain expected standards in the six areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress and their achievement is very good. Performance in tests has steadily improved over the last four years and in 2003 the standards attained by pupils were well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 pupils are achieving standards that are well above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing and above average in mathematics. In Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to make very good progress and achieve very well. Performance in tests at the end of Year 6 has generally been above or well above national averages in English and mathematics over the last four years and has compared very well with that in similar schools. Standards in science, however, have been falling during this time. In 2003 pupils attained well above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics, but standards in science were below national averages. A factor in this situation is the low number of pupils attaining the higher levels. The present Year 6 pupils are on track to attain standards that are well above average in English and above average in mathematics.

Standards are close to average in science, although not enough pupils are achieving higher standards because the work presented to them is not sufficiently challenging. Standards in information and communication technology have improved and are above those expected. Pupils achieve standards that are above those expected in geography, history, design technology and music, and standards in art and design that are well above those expected.

The pupils' personal development is **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave very well. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** and there is some excellent teaching. Examples of very good lessons were seen in all three sections of the school, including the Foundation Stage. Teachers give close attention to developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They have very good relationships with pupils and use an effective range of teaching strategies to make lessons interesting so that pupils enjoy their learning and work hard.

The curriculum is very good. It is well organised and benefits from very effective links with parents and the local community. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Good attention is given to the development of basic skills in English and mathematics, but the school also ensures that the arts are developed very well. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. The school cares for its pupils very well. The very good assessment arrangements ensure that their progress in learning is carefully monitored in order to plan appropriate support and guidance. Support staff are used very effectively to ensure that the differing needs of pupils are catered for very well and equality of opportunity is consequently very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good overall**. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has developed a very strong team approach within the staff. She is well supported by the very effective deputy headteacher and other senior staff. Procedures for school self-evaluation are excellent and information is used very effectively to inform strategic planning. Governors have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, fulfil their responsibilities well and ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are extremely pleased with the quality of education that their children receive and feel strongly that the staff expect their children to do their best and that, as a result, they make very good progress. The pupils have very positive views about the school and enjoy taking on responsibility. They feel that the school council is very effective in enabling them to contribute to school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

Improve the level of challenge presented to higher attaining pupils in science throughout Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards of attainment are **good**. Achievement throughout the school is **very good**. There is no significant difference in the levels of achievement of boys and girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are well above average. Pupils' writing skills are very well developed and used across the curriculum.
- Standards in art and design are well above those expected.
- Standards in Mathematics are above average.
- Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected nationally.
- The higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not challenged enough in science.
- Children make very good progress in all areas of learning in the nursery and reception classes and achieve very well. Their attainment by the time they enter Year 1 is average.
- Achievement throughout the school is very good. Children enter the school with below average levels of attainment, and in most recent years have greatly exceeded national levels in English and mathematics by the time they leave.

Commentary

- 1 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress and achieve very well. They generally attain well above average standards. Performance in tests in 2003 was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 in science, as shown by teacher assessments, was very high and overall performance was well above average. Attainment over the last four years has generally been very good. Standards attained in reading and writing have generally been well above average. Standards in mathematics have steadily improved during these years. Results compare very well with those in similar schools. This good performance in tests is reflected in the average points score table below.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.0 (18.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.7 (17.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.7 (17.3)	16.3 (16.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 In Years 3 to 6 there is some variation in standards, but overall they are good. Performance in tests in English and mathematics has generally been very good over the last four years; performance in science has been more variable. In the 2003 tests for pupils in Year 6, performance was very good in English and close to average in mathematics, but below average in science. The school successfully achieved the targets it had set for attainment at Level 4 in English and mathematics and the higher Level 5 in English, but not in mathematics. In 2003, compared with similar schools, results were well above average in English, average in mathematics, but below average in science. Whilst results in English have been rising overall during the last four years, in mathematics and science there has been a gradual decline, particularly in science.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (27.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.2 (28.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.3 (29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3 The majority of children enter the nursery class with levels of attainment that are below average compared to those expected. Because of the very effective teaching they receive, children make very good progress in all areas of learning and, by the end of the reception year, most meet the standards expected in all areas of learning and some exceed them.
- 4 Pupils in Year 1 to 6 make very good progress and achieve very well because teaching is very good. There is a very positive learning ethos in the school and pupils consequently have very good attitudes to learning. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are improving. The standards being attained in English by the present group of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils continue to be well above average. The attention given to the development of writing skills in English is very good and pupils' produce impressive lengthy pieces of text both in literacy lessons and in other subjects. Standards in mathematics are above average throughout the school. Pupils have secure numeracy skills and use these well across the curriculum. In science standards are improving. The number of pupils on target to achieve the expected level of attainment is around that expected and pupils have a reasonable understanding of fair testing and a good knowledge of a range of topics. However, not enough pupils are on track to achieve higher levels. The work presented to these pupils is still not challenging enough. Teachers make good use of computers in classrooms to enable information and communication technology (ICT) to be used across the curriculum and pupils' basic skills are well developed and standards overall are above average.
- 5 Pupils achieve standards that are above those expected in design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education. Standards in physical education are average. Pupils achieve particularly well in art and design, and standards are well above those expected, reflecting the attention given to the arts in the school. In the inspection, no difference in achievement between boys and girls was noticed. Pupils apply their mathematical and ICT skills to other subjects well and develop their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography particularly well.
- 6 The school works hard to ensure that the differing needs of pupils are met. Good provision is being made for the small number of gifted and talented pupils who have been identified. As a result, these pupils are making particularly good progress and are achieving very well. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs. They make good progress in relation to their prior attainment because of the quality of support they receive in lessons and the work that is planned to meet their needs. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other pupils at the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school promotes pupils' personal development **exceptionally well**, which leads to their having **very positive** attitudes to work and life and behaving **very well**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are both **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff members' personal example and consistent expectations help pupils to grow in maturity and self-confidence.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and understand that it requires effort on their part in order to succeed.
- Very good quality relationships pervade all areas of school life.
- Pupils' very good behaviour enhances the quality of their learning.
- Pupils' attendance levels are improving rapidly in response to the school's procedures.

Commentary

- 7 Pupils greatly enjoy being members of their school, appreciate the help offered to them by staff and welcome each day's different activities with interest and enthusiasm. Staff's expectations of positive attitudes and effort start in the nursery and continue consistently throughout the school so that pupils know exactly where they stand and how they should behave. This highly structured approach means that in practice very little time is spent on overt behaviour management and pupils of all ages can be trusted to get down to work, tidy up after themselves, share ideas and resources sensibly, and make best use of time. They listen very well to what others have to say, follow instructions and are eager to volunteer their own suggestions, all of which helps lessons to move at a lively pace. Staff make very good use of praise, which boosts pupils' self-esteem, but they are also swift to pick up on any less than good behaviour, encouraging pupils to understand that they are letting themselves down and, as appropriate, requiring them to apologise. Throughout the day, pupils behave very well and there have been no exclusions since the school opened.
- 8 The atmosphere in the school is one of openness and enjoyment. Staff treat each other, parents, visitors and pupils with respect, and pupils follow suit. The very good quality of relationships means that lessons progress in a very positive manner and that pupils want to please their teachers and work hard. They show great appreciation of others' skills and respect for others' beliefs. Pupils play well together at break times and are keen to volunteer their help. Bullying is highly unusual and dealt with swiftly and very effectively. Pupils carry out jobs efficiently and negotiate any 'swaps' required by, for instance, absence on an educational visit, between themselves. They clearly understand that their area of responsibility is an important cog in the wheel that keeps the school community running smoothly.
- 9 In addition to the above, the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development highly effectively through its rich curriculum, high quality displays and very good assemblies. Throughout the day pupils are encouraged to notice the detail of life, to reflect on the world, to appreciate what it has to offer and to grow in their understanding of how they can protect it while making the most of its opportunities. Quiet, calming music or birdsong waft through the building, pupils' attention is drawn to the wonderful scent of bluebells, music lessons incorporate compositions from a wide range of cultures, pupils record the life-cycle of a frog in collages using tissue paper to provide an impression of running water. As they progress through the school, pupils grow into mature, self-confident and tolerant young people.
- 10 Two years ago, attendance levels were well below the national average, in the most recent reporting year they were in line with the national average and currently they are one percentage point above that, with many pupils attending for 100 per cent of possible time. This is in direct response to the persistent efforts of the class teaching assistants, working in combination with the headteacher and educational welfare officer. Parents now understand the importance of regular attendance and support well the school's efforts to bring it about.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. The school very successfully provides for the needs of all its pupils in a very caring environment.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **very good overall**. Pupils' learning is **very good**. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and make very good progress throughout the school. Formal assessment procedures are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and tasks are generally challenging and interest and engage pupils very well.
- Teachers' relationships with pupils are very good. They manage their classes very well and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers explain new learning clearly and make effective use of questions to ensure that pupils understand.
- Support staff are used very well to ensure equal opportunity for all pupils.
- Good attention is given to teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Lessons progress at a lively pace.
- Formal assessment procedures are very good, but marking does not generally tell pupils what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (8%)	17 (45%)	18 (47%)	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

- 11 The proportions of very good and excellent teaching have increased significantly since the previous inspection and these increases contribute directly to the pupils' improved achievement. Teaching has many strong features. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and their explanations are lively and stimulating and successfully develop an enthusiastic response from pupils. They explain the objectives of the lesson to pupils in order that they develop a clear understanding of what they are to learn. Lessons build on previous learning, with teachers making good use of questions to review the previous work in order to develop pupils' understanding and lead into the new learning effectively. The pace of lessons is very good and tasks set are generally matched well to the capability of pupils. These well-organised approaches result in pupils developing a very good understanding of the topics being taught.

- 12 Teachers use a range of strategies to foster learning and develop pupils' social skills. For example, pupils cooperate well when given opportunities to discuss questions in two's in lessons such as mathematics. The atmosphere in lessons is very good with pupils working well together and having very positive and enthusiastic attitudes to their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which the pupils strive to fulfil. Relationships in the school are very good and teachers have a very caring approach. They work hard to ensure that each pupil is supported well in order to enable them to fulfil their potential. This successfully creates a very positive learning atmosphere in the school, and pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. Pupils, consequently, make very good progress in their learning and achieve very well.
- 13 Teachers give a high emphasis to the teaching of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy and, as a result, pupils make very good progress in these subjects. Teachers make good use of resources to ensure that tasks are interesting and challenging.
- 14 Formal assessment arrangements are very good and teachers use the information obtained effectively to set targets for individual pupils and plan work that appropriately challenges their capabilities. They know their pupils very well and use targeted questions to monitor pupils' understanding during lessons. The marking of pupils' work makes good use of positive comments to foster the pupils' self-esteem, but developmental points that would help the pupil understand what they must do to improve are used less well.
- 15 Teaching provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teaching assistants are well briefed about their roles before lessons start. There is good teamwork between teachers and assistants, which provides a good role model for the pupils and enhances their learning. The teaching assistants relate well to the pupils and this fosters positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are given good support in tasks that are well planned to meet their needs and enable them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**. All requirements are covered very well and provision is enriched by a **very good** range of activities beyond the school day. The accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of interesting and innovative curricular opportunities is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for the arts is very good.
- Pupils make a very good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage.
- The school's inclusive practices ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils with very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is very effectively evaluated.

Commentary

- 16 The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship. Pupils' literacy skills are reinforced very well through their effective use in history, geography and science. Provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship, including sex education and drugs awareness, is very good. A wide range of sporting and cultural visits, well chosen to link with the curriculum, is organised to extend and enrich pupils' experiences. The school has close links with the Church of St. Peter and the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter are celebrated there. This is an opportunity for the school choir to perform and drama presentations to be enacted.
- 17 The curriculum is rich in arts provision. Visitors to the school are immediately attracted by

the colourful and exciting range of art and design on display. These high quality displays in classrooms and communal areas of the school clearly celebrate pupils' successes and enhance their self-esteem. The arts curriculum contributes very well to pupils' cultural development through the good understanding they acquire of the role of renowned artists. Special assemblies celebrate the work of pupils who learn musical instruments. Pupils have performed dance at the Lowry Theatre and taken part in a presentation on the Victorians at Salford Quays, which involved them in drama and choral speaking. Opportunities such as these develop their confidence and self esteem.

- 18 The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Children benefit from a rich and lively range of experiences that are meticulously planned for their needs. Activities are remarkably well organised around topics that link up the six areas of learning in both classes. The children in nursery are awakened to big ideas in the world around them and this arouses wonder and curiosity in many of them. This very good start to school life continues into reception and so children develop an urge to learn as well as robust early skills for this stage of education.
- 19 The school makes sure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. A dedicated team of teaching assistants works very effectively with these pupils. Teachers ensure that effective provision is made based on information from assessment, which is used well, so that pupils build on what they already know. The pupils' individual learning plans show that they make very good progress and that achievement is very good in relation to their prior ability. Teaching assistants monitor and record pupils' progress and provide an appropriate blend of help and challenge.
- 20 The school monitors and evaluates the curriculum closely and seeks innovative ways of further developing it. This has proved a very successful approach. The school is always willing to make use of local and national initiatives to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils have benefited by the school's involvement with the Salford and Trafford Schools Sports Partnership. Planning for writing across the curriculum has been one of the factors in the rise in standards seen. Different groupings of pupils and creative timetabling are used where these will have a beneficial effect on learning. For example, Years 5 and 6 are taught ICT by the Year 4 teacher who is a computer specialist and his class is taught for history and geography by the Year 5 and Year 6 teachers. His considerable expertise is used to enable pupils to reach above average standards by the time they leave school.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **high quality** care, support and guidance for pupils and involves them **very well** in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have extremely strong, trusting relationships with staff.
- All staff pay very good attention to pupils' individual personal and academic needs.
- The Healthy Schools activities are having a big impact on pupils' lives.
- Welfare staff are well trained and support pupils very well.

Commentary

- 21 This is a school in which children's needs come first. Staff pay great attention to detail in order to help pupils feel comfortable in school and, consequently, pupils settle very well. They know that staff will listen to and help them and, therefore, they concentrate very well on their work in the secure, predictable environment. Very good arrangements to help the youngest children settle into school life mean that they quickly grow in confidence. There are also clear-cut procedures to welcome those who arrive part-way through their education, so that they swiftly come to know the routines and make new friends. The school monitors and

analyses pupils' progress very carefully and teachers use the information gained to offer individuals well-focussed guidance on what they need to do next in order to improve. The care and support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school reviews the progress of pupils with special educational needs rigorously each term. Their individual or group education plans highlight key areas for improvement with very concise and specific targets agreed with the pupils. A factor in the very good provision for these pupils is the early identification of needs and the action taken to make the necessary provision. Staff actively, and to very good effect, involve other pupils in supporting their peers with, for instance, their behaviour. This also helps the supporters to grow in empathy and understanding of their own, as well as others', reactions.

- 22 The arrangements to ensure health and safety, and child protection, are very good and carried out consistently on a day-to-day basis. All staff are very clear about what to do should they have concerns about a child and they are alert to any changes in mood or attitude. The midday welfare staff are very well led and managed and they carry out their duties very well. They have recently received training in how to run 'Fit Bods' activities, which pupils greatly enjoy while improving their levels of fitness and reducing the number of playground incidents. This is part of the Healthy Schools initiative, which has also led to the introduction of the school council through which pupils have a real say in, for instance, decisions about introducing 'Playground Pals'. With thoroughness typical of the school, teachers use other Healthy Schools activities in lessons, such as pupils having access to drinking water, so that pupils understand the science behind the actions. Understandably, parents and pupils are extremely positive about the levels of care and support that the school provides.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnerships with parents, other schools and the wider community are all **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are seen as vital contributors to their children's education and respond very positively to the school's high expectations and detailed guidance.
- Teachers make very good use of the community to enrich the opportunities offered to pupils.
- Links with other schools enhance the school's provision very well.
- Pupils' progress reports do not include enough detailed information.

Commentary

- 23 Parents are highly satisfied with The Deans and very appreciative of the staff's hard work on behalf of their children. From the outset, the school fully engages parents in their children's learning, clearly outlines its expectations of their involvement and, most importantly, offers them very good quality guidance on how they can help their child. Half termly topic information sheets include hints on how to help or games to play. Frequent meetings for parents explain, for instance, what the National Tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 involve, how mathematics is taught or how to make best use of hearing their child read at home. For example, after nursery children had enjoyed the teacher's reading of *Rosie's Walk*, parents were given a map to discuss with their child plus hints on how to use 'positional words'. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their child's progress and collaborate with teachers in reviewing and identifying the next steps for their children.
- 24 The school is very open with parents and keeps them well informed about important dates, pupils' involvement in activities or significant incidents that happen during the school day. In return, parents feel comfortable asking staff for further guidance if they do not understand something. They willingly approach the school if they have any concerns and play an energetic part in supporting their children's work at home. They find their discussions with teachers about their child's progress very informative and like the pupils' written reports, but,

although they comply with statutory requirements, the reports give only minimal information about pupils' levels of achievement or hints on what they need to do next in order to improve.

- 25 The school is outward looking in its approach to teaching and makes very good use of opportunities provided by the wider community to enhance the quality of pupils' education. To deepen pupils' understanding of history, they visit sites of interest, such as Stockport's air raid shelters, and talk with local people about their memories. To broaden their knowledge of different cultures and beliefs they visit different places of worship and enjoy demonstrations of, for instance, Indian dance or African drumming, as well as talking with those whose way of life differs from their own. Involvement in the local schools' sports partnership affords pupils many extra opportunities to take part in a variety of sports. Close curricular links with the high school to which most pupils transfer, relating to, for instance, science, mathematics and drama, add an extra dimension to the curriculum as well as helping pupils move on smoothly to the next phase of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good overall**. Governance is **good**, governors give good support to the school and meet their responsibilities well. The leadership provided by the headteacher is **excellent**. The school runs very smoothly because the quality of management is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's excellent leadership provides a very strong educational direction with an emphasis on the raising of standards.
- The deputy headteacher and senior staff support the headteacher very well.
- There is a very strong team ethos within the staff with a very good commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The school's self-evaluation procedures are excellent and information is very effectively used.
- The school is extremely well managed and subject management is very good.
- The governing body gives good support and works well with the headteacher to shape the direction of the school.

Commentary

- 26 The headteacher has a very clear vision for the continuous improvement of the school and provides excellent leadership. She works extremely hard and her sensitivity and drive provide an excellent role model for all staff. The deputy headteacher and senior staff share her commitment to high achievement and give her very strong support. Relationships in the school are very good. There is a very good team approach throughout all staff with a commitment to providing for the needs of all pupils to ensure equality of opportunity and high quality education. Similarly, pupils care well for each other and there is a very positive ethos throughout the school. The headteacher and staff have successfully created an enthusiasm for learning in pupils and they consequently achieve very well. As a result of this strong commitment to succeed, the school was awarded Beacon School status in 2000 and is used as a centre of good practice by the local education authority.
- 27 The governors support the school well. Because of their regular visits to the school, governors have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses; for example, they recognise that standards attained by the higher attaining pupils in science are not as high as they could be in Years 3 to 6. This places them in a strong position both to support and challenge decisions that are taken and to work with the headteacher and senior management team to identify strategies to improve teaching and learning. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and comply with all statutory requirements.

- 28 Management procedures are extremely well organised. Development planning is extensive and thorough. The school's self-evaluation process is excellent and this gives a very clear steer to development planning. The headteacher ensures that teaching and learning are regularly monitored and evaluated. Coordinators monitor teaching and learning in their subjects closely, draw up action plans and regularly review progress. Performance management is used extremely well. Performance targets focus on improving teaching and learning and link effectively with the school development plan. This helps to ensure that staff are fully involved in the school's development and is a powerful tool in improving the performance of the school.
- 29 The headteacher gives very close attention to the development and deployment of the staff. Induction procedures for new staff are excellent. The very effective use of training and development is a strong factor in improving the quality of teaching in the school. The good level of staffing has enabled a positive start to be made to reorganising the workload of staff. Tasks have been examined and allocated appropriately to accommodate new legal requirements.
- 30 Assessment procedures are very good. Performance in tests is carefully analysed and information gathered on individuals and different groups of pupils is used to plan support and intervention. This ensures that pupils' progress is tracked throughout their time in the school. Procedures to identify, support and monitor pupils with special educational needs are very effective. As a result the support given to pupils with special educational needs is well organised and they make good progress.
- 31 Financial management is very good and funds are administered very efficiently. The finances available to the school are used well to meet clear educational priorities. The school's approach to financial management includes an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of financial decisions in relation to the impact they have on pupils' learning and development. The school has a generous number of additional staff so that pupils of all abilities can be taught individually or in groups. This also ensures that pupils with special educational needs and some higher attaining pupils can be taught at an appropriate level. The governors rightly made a conscious decision to use the slightly larger than average carry forward from 2003 to ensure that these staffing levels were maintained in order to ensure a good quality of education for these pupils. Governors work closely with the headteacher to ensure that the principles of best value apply in all aspects of the school's work.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	552,631
Total expenditure	552,016
Expenditure per pupil	2,442

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	32,215
Balance carried forward to the next	32,830

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good overall and provides children with a rich and stimulating start to school. When children start in the nursery their skills and knowledge in most areas of learning are below those typical for their age. The exception to this is the area of physical development where children's skills and stamina are typical of most three -year olds. As a result of very good teaching, they make rapid progress and achieve well in all areas of the curriculum. The great majority will have reached the standards expected for this age group by the end of the reception year.

The very high level of challenge in the nursery engages these young minds through day-to-day challenges that help them to understand big ideas quickly. In reception also, children are keen to play and learn alongside others because adults guide them through some exciting activities that develop skills through play and exploration. There is a good balance between the activities led by adults and those where children choose for themselves. Both are very well linked into topics across the six areas of learning. At the end of their year in reception, children are ready for more challenging work in Year 1 of the National Curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults develop the children's trust and confidence very early.
- Children mature quickly into young learners.
- Children behave responsibly, listen very well and care about others.
- Teachers have very high expectations.

Commentary

32 Teaching of this area of learning is very good and successfully promotes the children's personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve well and by the time they enter Year 1 most attain the standard expected. There is an exciting momentum to the ideas that delight children in the nursery. This develops children into listeners who can share resources, negotiate their way through an activity and manage their own belongings maturely. Many of them become absorbed in their play and often there are moments where a child expresses wonder at something newly discovered. Learning is at the heart of this classroom and the teacher is passionate about building personal skills. Class routines help children to settle and feel secure in their environment but these merge into the background as children grow to expect to learn. Those in reception go on to develop the skills for reading, writing and number with a wealth of ideas and experiences. They continue to develop their personal skills well, learning to handle more choices in their relationships and behaviour.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop very good skills in listening, reading and writing.
- They use their knowledge of letter sounds and simple sentences when they write.
- In the nursery, language is used very skilfully to enrich children's understanding.
- In the reception class, children start to talk in pairs about what might happen in a story.

Commentary

33. Teaching is successful in developing children's language and literacy skills. Children make good progress, achieve very well and by the end of the reception year most attain the standards expected. There is a detail and thoroughness in the teaching plans that help each child to progress towards the next steps in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The high level of teacher knowledge in nursery and reception means that the two teachers work very well in building a rich foundation of language for children to develop skills and handle language for themselves. Teaching in the nursery provides a richness of language for the children to hear. Children use familiar words and lots of fun ways to read what is happening in the stories they share. Reception children build on this with their increasing knowledge of letter sounds to read and write. They know a lot about books. More able children read and spell simple three-letter words and a good number of longer words. They write lots of animated sentences for themselves with familiar opening phrases such as, "He might..", and "I can....". They delight in suggesting what the lion in a zoo story might do. Many of these reception children can chat with a friend about these antics to generate ideas.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Expectations are high and children achieve very well.
- Mathematics is woven into many routine activities.

Commentary

- 34 Teachers make mathematics fun and children enjoy the wide range of stimulating activities presented in the nursery and reception classes. In the nursery, mathematical ideas in everyday routines make this area of learning powerful. Children use their knowledge well as they play in the nursery fruit shop. So much so that some children see wonder in big numbers. This is because they are asked to consider questions such as: What is the number of children who have come to school today? And: Will there be enough segments in a tangerine to give each child one on the table?
- 35 In the reception class, the teacher's high expectations ensure that children develop a good level of independence by threading, sorting, constructing and gauging what they need. They learn to record their mathematical experiences in numbers purposefully and without stress. Children make good progress and achieve well throughout both classes so that by the end of the reception year most attained the standards expected. On entry to Year 1 most children can combine numbers such as 3 and 2 to make 5 and take 2 from 4 accurately.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children exceed the standards typical of children in nursery and reception in their use of computers.
- Their understanding of the world is enriched by the high quality of the curriculum.
- Children's achievements are celebrated very well and used to check progress in this area of learning.
- Teachers make huge efforts to encourage curiosity in scientific phenomena, the past and an early understanding of places and routes.

Commentary

36 Teaching is very skilful and successfully promotes very good learning and achievement. The highly effective organisation of activities fuses many aspects of the curriculum and helps to enrich the average level of children's talk. Adults provide very good support for children, prompting and guiding them in situations that demand concentration. Children's work across this area of learning is celebrated in a book that captures their achievement in successive moments in time. There is a wealth of interesting work that provides imaginative ways for children in both years to flourish. For example, reception children construct small zoo worlds with figures and wooden blocks, building a giraffe enclosure with an eye to height. In one nursery session, children were searching to find out where the seeds of a pineapple are to be found! Children's drawings of themselves and houses on computers show remarkable precision and detail. The bank of computers used by both nursery and reception are a powerful tool for early learning. Children make connections between their existing knowledge and that of the wider world with ease.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop their manipulative skills well.
- Opportunities in the school hall for nursery demonstrate children's excellent behaviour and sense of order in early gymnastic opportunities.
- The nursery has a well-designed outdoor area with good resources.
- Reception children have limited opportunity to develop the full the range of skills for strength, mobility and stamina on large equipment outdoors.

Commentary

37 Teaching and learning are good overall. Children have plenty of opportunities to use small tools and materials. They show skills and control that are typical for their age when they handle pencils and manipulate small figures and materials. Nursery children show a remarkable and above expected level of control and understanding of safety in their outstanding sessions of gymnastics in the school hall. The outdoor area for the nursery class is very good and activities successfully extend opportunities for children to regularly use the good resources, tackling scooters and tricycles with typical skill for their age. Children in reception have an adequate number of sessions outside, but the reception outdoor area has limited facilities. They make use of the nursery area when possible and there are plans for an area similar to that in the nursery to be provided. This is needed so that the reception children can develop the level of stamina and full range of physical skills expected for young children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many of the children are imaginative in their play.
- Nursery children burst into familiar songs spontaneously.
- Resources for construction encourage good quality imaginative role-play in nursery and reception.

Commentary

38 Evidence from children's paintings, their small world play and in the "Fruit Shop" indicates that they are very engaged in the experiences provided. Often, new and exciting ideas flow freely from work with adults into imaginative play. Teachers link this to a good range of media so that children can represent their own ideas and feelings. Teaching of this area of learning is good. Teachers help children to see the design and patterns in natural objects such as fruit as they learn to print. Very clear links across the areas of learning in both classes mean that children can express themselves imaginatively because there are lots of ideas to trawl. There is a flourish of creativity and energy that bubbles when children link up the ideas they have been exploring with the media, the tools and the freedom of the moment. This is why they achieve so well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very good in all aspects by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is very good overall and makes a significant contribution to the progress and achievement of all pupils.
- Feedback to pupils through careful marking enables them to know what they have done well and how to improve.
- Pupils' writing skills are particularly well developed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants plan very well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Subject leadership is excellent.

Commentary

39 Standards are well above those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. A significant factor in the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is the very good support and encouragement they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants.

40 Pupils speaking skills are very good and they listen attentively because questioning is used effectively. They are encouraged to explain their answers or opinions and speak confidently and clearly. They discuss effectively with their learning partners and in larger groups and speak well in public. For example in an exceptional class led assembly for the whole school and parents, pupils in Year 3 showed great confidence in their dramatic representations of two Aesop fables. One pupil retold, without any notes, his own fable in an accomplished and assured manner. The assembly ended with a pupil confidently leading a prayer of thanks to God.

41 Pupils' reading skills are developed well in Years 1 and 2 and they achieve well. They use effective strategies to read new words and their comprehension is good. They understand how to find their way around non-fiction books and the older pupils understand that there is a range of reading skills and know when it is relevant to use them. All pupils are encouraged to read with parents and carers at home. Well kept records help pupils to progress and

understand where improvements need to be made. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve very well in reading, with the development of their knowledge and enjoyment of books going hand in hand with the development of reading skills. Their reading of quite complex books is good and they are developing firm preferences for the work of different authors.

- 42 Teachers have worked hard to raise standards in writing, resulting in pupils making very good progress and achieving very high standards by the end of Year 6. The thorough, flexible use of the National Literacy Strategy ensures that pupils have good opportunities to practise writing in a wide range of styles.
- 43 Teaching is very good overall with some excellent teaching seen in Year 3 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and is one of the main reasons that standards have risen.
For example:

In an excellent lesson with Year 6, pupils selected an appropriate style in which to write a report offering constructive criticism to a company, which had marketed a school bag. The teacher's lively manner of questioning and passing comment on pupils' remarks made learning fun. She was prepared to let pupils cross question each other and a lively discussion ensued. This prompted pupils to make suggestions for improvement of the design. Energetic probing by the teacher made pupils express themselves more precisely. They were eager to participate, seeing themselves in the role of consumers. The teacher had excellent relationships with the class and made learning exciting. Her class management was excellent. The teacher's use of lively interjections during the debate and a mere glance had the desired effect and the manner in which pupils responded reflected the high respect evident between teacher and pupil. The teacher was prepared to share a joke and laugh along with pupils and this ensured that pupils' interest never flagged. The subsequent written task was well matched to the ability levels of the pupils who worked closely against the criteria of their personal writing target to improve their success level.

- 44 Particular strengths of teaching are the high expectations of work and behaviour, the challenging tasks matched to prior learning, the pace of the lessons and the way teachers arouse the interest of all pupils, encouraging them to keep their minds on the tasks. The high quality of the marking makes a very significant contribution to the gains in pupils' learning. Pupils have a self-evaluation box for each piece of writing, which encourages them to check their work carefully against their current targets for improvement. An 'Improving my Writing' book was introduced throughout the school last year. The marking of the half-termly pieces of assessed writing in this book ensures that pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve on their current level of writing.
- 45 Teachers and teaching assistants help pupils with special educational needs very well in English lessons but without restricting the pupils' opportunities to learn independently. Their work is linked to their individual education plans well.
- 46 The subject coordinator, who is the headteacher, gives an excellent lead to the subject. She has highly acknowledged skills in this area of the curriculum. She records pupils' progress carefully, analyses data and applies this information to identify areas of under-performance and target extra support where needed. She uses her own considerable expertise to suggest to colleagues innovative ways to teach English and she supports them by practical and realistic strategies, which they incorporate into their lessons. The marking practice is a good example of this. She observes all class teachers as part of her monitoring of teaching and learning of the subject and advises them of any development points. This has supported the good level of improvement in teaching since the previous inspection.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

- 47 Pupils have sufficient literacy skills to achieve well in other subjects. There is a whole school focus on providing planned opportunities for pupils to record information in their own words and often at some length. Such opportunities make a good contribution to attainment in English. For example, pupils in Year 6 produced some very good creative writing based on their study of World War Two inspired by the story 'Rose Blanche' by Ian McEwan. They imaginatively wrote of their experiences through the eyes of a young German child. Writing of this kind gave pupils the opportunity to try and understand human feelings and emotions and the way in which events impact on people. This work was an excellent example of the strong spiritual development, which is seen in the school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are very good and lessons are challenging.
- Pupils' enjoy mathematics and their attitudes to the subject are very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed with a strong focus given to monitoring the teaching and learning.
- Very effective use of support staff ensures pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

Commentary

- 48 Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above the national average. Over the last four years the school's performance in the national tests has generally been well above that of similar schools, although the 2003 results were not as high because of the characteristics of the group of pupils. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged and many are achieving standards that exceed the expectations for their ages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the very good support they are given in lessons. Boys and girls make similar progress.
- 49 A significant factor in the pupils achieving so well is the high quality of the teaching and the effective support given to pupils by teaching assistants. Virtually all the teaching seen was very good and the remainder was good. The pupils' desire to learn and do well is fostered by the very good relationships in classrooms. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their explanations are clear and interesting. Lessons are lively and the pace is very good. As a result pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good. This impacts very positively on learning and achievement.
- 50 Teachers have high expectations of pupils and work is challenging. Good attention is given to practical problem solving and pupils are positively encouraged to explore different approaches to solving problems and to explain their working out. This helps them to gain confidence and acquire the skills to carry through tasks and solve problems successfully. For example, in a very good lesson with Year 6 on multiplying 3 digit numbers with decimals, pupils explored different ways of working out answers. Higher attaining pupils were set the challenge of working out how many seconds they would have lived when they were thirteen years old. They rose to this challenge enthusiastically and competed against their peers to be the first to solve the problem.
- 51 Subject leadership and management are very good. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the subject are very well organised. The coordinator has observed lessons, monitored planning and scrutinised pupils' work. Formal assessment procedures are very

good and test information is used very effectively to track pupils' performance and identify any who are not making the expected progress. This enables intervention to be planned effectively. Individual target setting arrangements are very good and targets are made known to pupils. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 52 Mathematics is developed well across the curriculum in subjects such as geography, science and design and technology. Pupils gather information carefully and use their number skills well to calculate results and then represent information clearly in charts and graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' understanding of scientific ideas and investigative methods is strong.
- Standards are average: the four-year downward trend in performance has been halted by good subject leadership.
- The quality of teaching is good and lifts the achievement of lower attaining pupils particularly well.
- Pupils with special needs in learning are well supported.
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not challenged enough.

Commentary

- 53 The steadily declining standards, evident in National test results over the last four years, have been given close attention by the school. Determined subject leadership is now resulting in an improvement in standards. Overall standards are now close to average. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 most pupils are on track to achieve the expected level, but the number of pupils in Years 3 to 6 working at higher levels is not as high as it should be. Overall pupils' achievement is good. The school's rigorous approach to the teaching of scientific ideas and the consistency of investigative work in all year groups means that most pupils achieve well. However, the higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not sufficiently challenged. These pupils, who have the capacity to achieve more, are beginning to show some momentum in their work, but activities are often not challenging enough. They have good scientific knowledge, skills and understanding and now require additional challenge to use these independently.
- 54 Teaching is good and lessons are well planned and stimulating. In most lessons teachers give pupils lots of chances to work together, to explore ideas and follow their own lines of enquiry to feed their curiosity. The depth of understanding of scientific terms by the majority of pupils is a strength fostered by lots of practical work. Teachers check what pupils have learned rigorously and use this information to fine-tune the next lessons.
- 55 The volume and quality of pupils' investigative work are good because of the enthusiasm and impetus of the subject coordinator and the keenness of teachers. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of investigative approaches throughout Years 3, 4 and 5 and by Year 6, pupils can explain their methods well. They understand how to organise an investigation and can identify what is likely to happen given varying factors. They do this with ease. However, more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 find it difficult to say what they need to do to improve their work and they see the use of computers more as a revision aid than as an aid to scientific enquiry.
- 56 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have an excited approach to 'finding out' in lessons. They use questions such as: "What am I trying to find out?" as a help when they explore the characteristics of materials and living things. Pupils in Year 2 observe, talk, write and use mathematical graphs to handle information. In one example, a child recorded: "The fat

caterpillar spins a cocoon and it goes hard, but it looks like silk.” Those pupils with special educational needs are provided with helpful ways to record. These include very well designed worksheets. Similarly, more able infant pupils have pleasing opportunities to record their findings for themselves.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school now benefits from very good resources, which match the needs of the curriculum.
- Very good teaching helps to maintain high standards.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils.
- The subject is very well led and managed by the coordinator.

Commentary

- 57 The standards attained by pupils in Years 3 to 6 are above average and achievement is very good. No lessons were on the timetable in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection, but scrutiny of assessment data and work on display indicates that these pupils achieve very well and standards are also above average.
- 58 At the time of the last inspection, the available hardware was insufficient to fulfil the needs of the coordinator’s plans for more advanced applications. This is no longer the case. The school benefits from a suite of computers used by pupils in Years 3 to 6 and a separate, smaller facility adjacent to the classrooms used by pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school also has a good number of laptop computers to supplement this provision, which can be used in the classrooms. This effectively means that pupils have very good access to a computer. The teacher can choose to have pairs working in the classroom or pupils can use all available machines and have sole use of a computer. In addition, a very good range of software is available, which is used effectively to support the development of pupils’ skills.
- 59 Teaching is very good. Teachers’ have good specialist knowledge and use the digital interactive whiteboard well to give clear demonstrations and succinct explanations. The use of national guidance as the basis for planning ensures that pupils experience all of the expected subject strands. Word processing is used well in other subjects. For example, in a lesson with Year 3, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, learned very quickly how to use the shift key. The work was closely linked to their literacy work on correct punctuation and was additionally well matched to individual targets in English so that all pupils could experience success. The teacher showed a good balance in her lesson between the teaching of new skills and encouraging pupils’ autonomous use of ICT.
- 60 Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and, consequently, pupils have very good attitudes to their work. When they work in pairs, they are co-operative and support each other well. They move sensibly from the classroom to the computer suite and in the classroom they handle the laptops carefully. They follow instructions well and so work at a good pace. Good preparation and use of resources was seen in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher’s skilled questioning helped pupils see how to develop a branching data base and appreciate the concepts of such work.
- 61 The coordinator has very good subject knowledge and leads the subject very well. His considerable expertise is used to teach the Year 5 and Year 6 classes and this has led to the above average standards which most of these pupils attain. He monitors teaching to ensure consistency in the teaching of skills and their use across the curriculum and has developed a system for recording pupils’ progress through the school’s scheme of work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 62 The use of ICT across the curriculum is very good. There is a whole school plan to show how skills can be used and developed systematically in all subjects. Word processing skills are used in many areas of the curriculum. Particularly attractive use is made in English to write poems, letters and stories. Work produced in history and in religious education has led pupils to search the Internet effectively for information, copy and paste pictures, resize and change fonts and colour.

HUMANITIES

- 63 Only one lesson for history and one for geography were seen; therefore, it is not possible to form overall judgements about provision. The evidence from inspection indicates that the humanities curriculum is very good, that standards are above average and pupils achieve very well.
- 64 In **history**, teachers' planning and pupils work shows that teaching is very good and the curriculum is covered very well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a very good understanding of how things have changed over time. They know that medical care is much improved and talk knowledgeably about the lives of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole, referring to the Crimean war. They learn about historical events such as the Gunpowder Plot and World War 1, naming the monarchs who reigned during those periods. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a very good factual knowledge and understanding of events in history. At the outset of a topic they pose questions to be answered and researched and make good use of books, artefacts, CD ROM's and the Internet. Progress is carefully assessed by the teacher at the completion of each piece of work and effectively informs planning for the next stage of learning. A recent visit to Stockport air raid shelters promoted imaginative role-play, during which pupils explored and learned about the effects of evacuation on family life. Other junior pupils know and research aspects of the lives of the Ancient Greeks and history is used well to extend pupils' writing and ICT skills.
- 65 In geography, the evidence shows that teaching is very well organised and that the subject is covered very well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good basic knowledge and understanding of simple aspects of physical and human **geography**. They know many facts about their own locality and how it differs from others. For example, they compare the features and lifestyles of Swinton with those of the seaside town of Blackpool. Pupils demonstrate very good levels of achievement when writing and talking about their work using appropriate geographical terms. When asked about grid references they know these are synonymous with co-ordinates and use terms such as 'keys' and 'scales' accurately. Pupils know and understand about environmental change and appreciate the effects of Arctic and desert climatic conditions. Year 6 pupils are able to carry out geographical enquiry, applying analytical and presentational techniques, particularly the skills required to use effectively, maps, plans, diagrams and graphs such as pie-charts. They follow a river's journey and recognise changes in physical features. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have a good knowledge and understanding of the similarities and differences between global locations such as England and Kenya. They explore pertinent social and political issues, such as how water affects life in the South American country of Bolivia.
- 66 Very effective resources have been built up and provide good support for work in the humanities. Worksheets are usually of good quality, but are occasionally over-used for some topics. History and geography are very well led by enthusiastic coordinators who manage the subjects very effectively, keeping careful checks on pupils' work, teachers' planning and the quality of teaching.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and lively.
- Pupils have high levels of interest.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

- 67 Although it was only possible to see three lessons during the inspection, evidence from these, from assemblies and an examination of pupils' work indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 are above the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good. This is because teachers make sure that work is matched to their needs. This judgement is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
- 68 Teaching is good. Teachers engage pupils' interest well and they develop a good knowledge and understanding of the principal world faiths. Teachers question well and give pupils opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils are very willing to answer because they know that their responses will be respected. In a Year 5 lesson on Buddhism, the teacher instilled enthusiasm for the subject very effectively by expressing her own interest, by explaining clearly what pupils will do in the lesson and making sure that the pupils made connections with previous learning. After reading the story of Prince Siddharta Guatama, she helped pupils to understand that their learning over the next few weeks would be like his journey as they seek with him to find answers to questions relating to death, pain and old age. Visits to places of worship such as the synagogue, the mosque and a church are all used well to develop good learning from first hand experiences. Pupils' writing makes a significant contribution to the very good standards attained by pupils in English.
- 69 The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in the school is excellent. The work, which they do in religious education, makes a very significant contribution to this aspect of their education. Lessons give pupils an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs. They are encouraged to recognise and respect social and cultural differences. The work of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 shows that they have opportunities to explore feelings of sadness and happiness and in their own writing of prayers they ask for forgiveness and give thanks to God.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

- 70 Only two lessons were seen in art and design and three in music. In physical education, visiting coaches were taking the lessons observed and no lessons were observed in design and technology. Therefore it is not possible to judge the quality of provision in these subjects. Inspectors looked at teachers' planning, samples of pupils' work and talked with pupils.
- 71 In **art and design**, the many examples of pupils' current and past work and teachers' planning indicate that teaching is very good and that standards are well above those expected. The school is providing pupils with very good varied experiences in all aspects of art and design. Teachers' planning indicates that teaching is very good and the subject is covered well. As a result, pupils develop good skills in the use of a wide range of media and achieve very well.
- 72 Good use is made of visits and visiting artists to provide stimulating experiences and generate good artwork. For example, Year 1 pupils' paintings after their visit to a nearby farm show very good use of colour and tone. They have also worked with a visiting artist to produce a very attractive three-dimensional caterpillar and flowers. There is a good focus on three-dimensional work, particularly in model making with different materials. Year 2 pupils have created very attractive facemasks using paper mache and older pupils in Year 5 have

used clay very effectively to produce coil pots. Pupils learn to use a wide range of drawing materials and develop very good drawing skills as they progress through the school. By Year 6 many pupils show very good artistic skills. The use of line, shade and tone in their pencil and charcoal sketches of musical instruments is very effective. Across the school there is plenty of evidence to show that ICT is used well to create computer art. The pictures based on the work of Lowry produced by Year 2 and Year 3 pupils are attractive and show very good observational skills as well as effective use of the computer.

- 73 Teachers developed pupils' observational skills well. Good use was made of the computer and projector to show pupils the work of specific artists. The teachers' effective use of questions ensured that pupils looked closely at the pictures. This successfully generated a high level of interest and pupils' observational skills were used well to join in the discussion about the features of the work. In a lesson with Year 1, pupils consequently used their observational skills well to first draw an animal and then used plasticine to produce a three dimensional model of the animal. Similarly, in a lesson with Year 3, pupils used a range of materials well to create a collage of a journey using secret symbols. The high level of concentration they displayed reflected their interest and enjoyment of the subject.
- 74 The school places a high emphasis on developing the arts and this is reflected in the high quality artwork around the school. Teachers give very careful attention to displaying the work attractively and this creates a very stimulating and aesthetically pleasing learning environment. The subject is very well led and managed by the coordinator. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development as a result of her effective monitoring and evaluating of the teaching and learning throughout the school.
- 75 In **design and technology**, the quality of pupils' work is above that typically seen in Year 6 and in Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 have designed and made books and given great attention to detail and suitability for purpose. The design process is well rounded and thorough and there is good evidence of pupils' appraisal of their successes. The work of Year 2 pupils is creative and owes much to the very positive and well thought out curriculum in which literacy and computers are used very well for research and for pupils to reflect on what they might improve.
- 76 In **music**, the standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 exceed those expected. Three junior lessons were seen during the inspection and the quality of singing was sampled in assemblies. These clearly indicate that the quality of teaching is very good. The specialist teachers and the subject coordinator bring a richness to the creative arts that increases pupils' cultural awareness of non-European sounds such as those of Africa, India and the Solomon Islands. Expert flute playing and very good technical knowledge, together with creative ideas for teaching, help to build a very good understanding of musical structure in pupils. For example, Year 3 pupils know the different features that contribute in layers to a musical piece. In fact they used this knowledge to describe the antics of a musical frog as he zipped up and down the notes. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to improve their skills in performances. School assemblies show that singing is very tuneful. There is good diction and control. The flair of the subject coordinator in leading the vocal work of her Year 3 class is outstanding. Pupils "copycat" the rhythms and dynamics of her vocals in unison and with panache. These skills are developed further in annual performances, which give pupils the chance to shine.
- 77 In **physical education** three lessons were observed, but all were taken by visiting coaches. Involvement in the Salford and Trafford school sports coordinator partnership is being used well to enhance provision in the subject. The expertise of the coaches provided under this scheme is effectively developing pupils' games skills. Pupils in Year 6 participated enthusiastically in the hockey and cricket sessions observed and their skills were average overall in both games. In hockey, they understood the need to control the ball with one side of the stick and showed reasonable skills when dribbling and passing the ball to a partner. In the cricket session they put a great deal of effort into a small team game aimed at developing

their ability to throw and catch a ball and their skills were close to those expected. They demonstrated a high degree of competitiveness and team spirit when playing this game. The lesson with Year 4 pupils also focused on developing cricket skills. Pupils enjoyed working in two's when throwing and catching a ball and showed very good attitudes to the subject. The majority of pupils demonstrated reasonable skills. In these lessons pupils' achievement was satisfactory.

- 78 From an analysis of planning and discussions with teachers it is clear that all elements of National Curriculum physical education are taught. Pupils in Year 3 have swimming lessons and by the time they leave the school virtually all pupils are able to swim the nationally expected 25 metres. Good attention is given to developing pupils' dance skills and classes of pupils have performed at the Lowry Centre. The school works hard to develop pupils' physical fitness and has introduced Multi-Stage Fitness Tests, linked to a healthy eating programme, throughout Years 3 to 6. Pupils are given good opportunities to participate in competitive team games and the range of after school sports activities is very good.
- 79 Subject management is very good. The coordinator is very enthusiastic and works hard to develop the skills and confidence of other staff in order to improve provision for pupils. She has a very good awareness of the areas for development as a result of her effective monitoring of the subject and has drawn up an appropriate action plan.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

- 80 Planning shows that this area is mainly taught through other subjects in the curriculum and no lessons were seen during the inspection. Consequently, no judgement is made about overall provision. However, it is obvious from other evidence that this aspect of learning is taught very well and given very good attention. The school has attained the Healthy School Award and careful attention is given to developing pupils' awareness of the value of a good diet, sex and drugs education and personal health and safety.
- 81 Pupils are given opportunities to express their views, and this develops their confidence and sense of responsibility. Each class has a council meeting, which feeds information to the school council. The members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and make positive suggestions about how to improve the school. These views are given close attention by the school and pupils are consequently developing a good awareness of the democratic process. Circle time sessions (whole class discussion sessions) enable pupils to examine relationships and develop their awareness of the needs of others. A link with a school in Kenya has been developed and pupils collect money and send it to the school twice a year. They also collect for a number of charities.
- 82 A feature of the work of the school is the way it works to ensure that each child is cared for very well. Close attention is given to making pupils aware of dangerous circumstances. For example, Year 6 pupils participate in the Crucial Crew initiative. Pupils are given the task of being 'playground pals' in order that individuals feeling insecure may be given support at playtimes. Pupils relate well to their peers and to teachers, and relationships in the school are very good. The range of responsibilities presented to pupils is successful in developing their social awareness and they demonstrate very mature approaches to life in the school. The ethos in the school is excellent, it is warm and friendly and very conducive to developing a sense of security and well being in pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	1

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).